

ON PLASTIC AND THE PLANET

1 The massive expansion of plastic began in the second half of the 20th century, with the discovery that a **WASTE PRODUCT FROM THE PETROCHEMICAL INDUSTRY** could be used to make PVC.



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7 We wear plastic. Polyester and other synthetic fibers are made from petroleum or natural gas. Making a **POLYESTER SHIRT** may emit between **3.8 AND 7.1 KILOGRAMS OF CO₂**.



2 Between 1950 and 2017 a total of **9.2 BILLION TONNES OF PLASTIC** were produced. That is more than one tonne for each person now living on Earth. The biggest share consists of single-use products and packaging. Less than ten percent of all plastic ever produced has been recycled.



8 Plastic fuels climate change. If current trends continue, plastics will have caused around 56 gigatonnes of CO₂ emissions by 2050. In other words: making plastic could cost **10 TO 13 PERCENT OF THE REMAINING CARBON BUDGET** to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

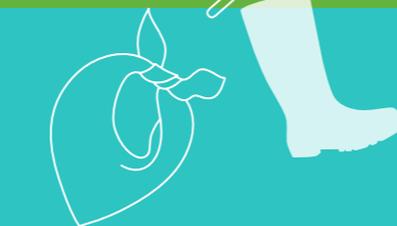
3 In 1978, Coca-Cola first decided to replace its iconic glass bottles with plastic ones. Now, **DISPOSABLE CUPS, PLASTIC PLATES AND OTHER UTENSILS** have become an indispensable part of our fast-paced daily lives.



9 A handful of multinationals control the global market for plastic, which is flooded by **CHEAP FRACKED GAS** from the USA. Ineos, Europe's biggest plastics producer, is investing billions to import feedstock from the USA to make plastics in Europe.



4 Plastic generates many **HEALTH RISKS**. An array of chemicals is added to the base plastic to give it desirable characteristics. But these chemicals are hazardous to health, and they accumulate in indoor air and house dust.



10 For decades, the plastics industry has resisted efforts to limit plastic production and the damage it causes. It invests billions of dollars and pays armies of lobbyists to win subsidies, prevent regulation and **SHIFT THE BLAME** to consumers and poor countries in Asia.



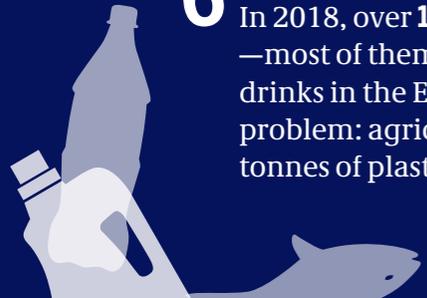
5 Plastic waste and microplastics floating in the world's oceans are a much-discussed problem. But few realize that **PLASTIC POLLUTION OF THE SOIL** can be between 4 and 23 times higher than in the seas.



11 In 2018, China banned the import of plastic waste. Other countries also refusing to act as the world's garbage bin and are sending waste back. The four **BIGGEST EXPORTERS** are the USA, Japan, Germany and the UK.



6 In 2018, over **1.13 TRILLION ITEMS OF PACKAGING**—most of them plastic—were used for food and drinks in the EU alone. Packaging is not the only problem: agriculture uses around 6.5 million tonnes of plastic worldwide each year.



12 The global **BREAK FREE FROM PLASTIC** movement holds consumer-goods companies and plastic producers accountable for the waste they generate and champions zero waste communities and lifestyles. Over 1,500 organizations and thousands of individuals have joined this movement.

